

^{A 24}
WORD
^{IN}
SEASON:
^{OR, A}
LETTER
^{FROM A}
Reverend Divine
^{TO A}
Justice of the Peace
^{IN}
LONDON.

Licensed, May the 4th. 1679.

LONDON,
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A WORD in Season, &c.

S I R,

IN Answer to Yours, of the 4th. Instant; I cannot but acquaint you, that ever since I heard any thing of this late *Hellish Plot*. Contrived by the *Roman Catholicks*, against his Majesties most sacred Person, our Religion, and Government; and have observed what Gracious *Proclamations*, and Suitable *ORDERS* of King and Council, have been frequently exhibited for the Extirpation of those Common Enemies of our Land, and perpetual Disturbers of Mankind, *Priests*, *Jesuites*, and other *Romish Recusants*; and yet, to our sad Experience, have seen how both the City and Country still swarm with these Destructive Vermine, who yet hide their Permeradus Heads in every Hole, and Corner of the Nation; and are both ready, and willing too, upon the least Occasion offered them, to Sally out, and make Desperate Excursions; either to the Proselyting, or stirring up Dissention among his Majesties good Subjects, Firing of Towns or Cities, Committing of Clandestine Murders; or any other Hellish Impiety, be it never so Black, or deep Dy'd, so it may but conduce to the *Romish Interest*, and *Protestant Ruin*: I say, *Sir*, having observed, that these Evils still remain among us; I have been thus bold, partly through that intimate Friendship, where-with you have been alwayes pleas'd to Honor me; and partly through an earnest Desire, to satisfy my own Conscience, in the Discharge of that Function, wherein Providence has been pleas'd to place me; to give you my own Sentiments, (which, I think, I may term

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term *Supplicationes Populi*, The Wilhes of the People)
of which, yet I am in no wise fond; but should be glad
to have them Return'd, when Corrected by your better
Judgment.

The great Thing which I would offer to your Care and
Consideration, is, That since our Great City, the *Metropo-*
polis of our whole Nation, is by the *Hellish Conspiracy*
of our Implacable Enemies, at this Day more particular-
ly threatned with those two most Terrible Judgments of
Sword, and *Fire*; the latter of which, if not seasonably
prevented, is in all likelihood, like to be the greatest
Incourager of the former: How Commendable would
it be, if the afore-mentioned *Orders* and *Prclamations*
of his Majesties, (wherein he hath divulged all the
Marks of a Gracious Sovereign, and a good Christian)
were by those his Officers, to whom they are Recomm-
mended, put into as strict Execution, as they were at
first design'd? What, Is it not enough, that we have
a *God*, but we must have a *King* too, who takes greater
Care of us, than We of our Selves? Shall he Con-
descend, so far, as to grant us a Power, and shall not
we use the Means for our Security? but like drowfie
Snayls, lie slumbering in our several Houses, till they be
either Demolish't, or burnt about our Ears? O that I
could awake every Dividual Officer out of this Fatal
Stupidity, and stir him up to Purge the City of those
Skulking *Recusants*; who, like Crude Humors, infest
every Part of Her; and have often set her into such
Burning Feavors, as have threatned to bring both her,
and all her Inhabitants, to speedy Ruin! It would be
a good Work therefore, to see where the Fault lies: If
Inferior Officers are either Remiss, or Timorous; for
fear, forsooth; of offending their Friends, Neighbors, or
Relations; and will not take notice of every *Papist* they
know of, because (perhaps) he is one of their Servants,

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or seems himself to be a harmless, innocent Fellow. I say, for fear of these important Abuses, it would be well; if such Officers were inspected, and punished by their Superiors. This is no time for Ceremony, or Complement. The Nation is immediately concern'd therein; and no less than our Lives, Liberties, and Fortunes, lie at Stake. Besides, no *Roman Catholick* is now to be trusted, tho' of never so silly, and unpromising an Aspect: We know, that the subtlest *Jesuites* have obscured themselves under the meanest Trades, or Callings: And therefore, whilst we Connive at a Taylor, Weaver, or Shoemaker, &c. of that Perswasion, we do not know, but we harbor a *Coleman*, *Staly*, or *Pickering*, amongst us; who, whilst he holds us in suspense with a seeming Friendship, is secretly Contriving how to introduce our Enemies to Cut our Throats. Nay further; I know, that the main Current of their Extravagant Principles, do so incourage and prompt them to Treachery and Blood shed, that were my own Brother a *Roman Catholick*, and knew me to be otherwise, I would refuse to Bed with him, for fear he should stab me in my Sleep. There is no Faith, no Trust to be found in them: No Obligation can engage them to Peace: No Oaths can tie them to Loyalty, or a civil Conversation, among others of a Different Opinion; which a Reverend Divine took particular Notice of, and upon an urgent Occasion, exprest himself thus before a Great and Learned Auditory, in his Sermon. *Conformity* (sayes he) *to the Oath of Allegiance, and other outward formal Satisfaction of the State, concurring with a Resolution to continue in Popery, is far more Pernicious to the State, than open and profest Recusancy.* For, first, either by Power of *Papish* Dispensation, which great Men especially, may for their Money easily procure: They may thus become more notoriously Serviceable to the Church of *Rome*, than before.

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2dly. He declines and diverts the watchful Eye of State-Jealousy, from its ordinary Vigilancy over *Popish Villanies* and *Machinations*: Whereby he more securely contrives his *Plots* and *Designs*; and thinking himself unsuspected, most dangerously concurs with that *Man of Sin*; to the wasting of our Church, the distrengthening of the State, and the total Subversion of Religion and Government.

3dly. He lies more dangerously shrowded under Respect, and the undeserved Reputation of a Good Subject; and so may with greater Bravery, wound and weaken the better Side, vex Goodness and Good Men; promote *Papery*; hinder the Proceedings against *Papists*, under colorable Ostentations of safer Policy, and flourishing Pretences of deeper Reaches into the Mysteries of State.

4thly. He that Conforms, in outward Obedience to the STATE; by virtue of a *Popish Indulgence*, *Dispensation*, or *Pardon*, is more than ordinarily obliged to Recompence the *Popes* Liberality therein; with some more Remarkable and Notorious Service to the *See of Rome* than ordinary.

5thly. He that with willful Inlargement of Conscience, and secret sturdy Resolution, takes the Oath, is in all probability, most likely to grow Revengful and Inveterate against those that imposed it.

Upon these Grounds, I cannot but think it dangerous; to put too much Confidence, even in *Church-Papists*: whose State, while they yet are premeditatedly resolved to continue in *Papery*, is, if we will Credit their own Doctors, very dangerous; *Vide Bernards Legal Repentance*, p. 59.

I speak not, to drive or detain any *Papist* from the Church: No; If he leaves that obstinate Temper behind him, and enters our Congregation, (as he ought to do) with Humility, Reverence, and Godly Fear, submitting his Understanding to the Illumination of that

Powerful Spirit of God, which opened the Heart of *Lydia*, the Eyes of *Saul*, and Converted Hundreds to the *Primitive Church* in a few Hours; I should then rejoyce at his Coming, and should for his farther Incouragement, allot him the best seat in the Church. But if, on the Contrary, if he comes meerly out of Formality, with no expectation to be benefitted by what he Hears, I look on him no better than a profest *Recusant*; and verily believe, It had been better he had kept away.

But it may be some will reply, What can possibly be more required, and exacted from these Men, than Conformity to outward Obedience to the State? what better Security, or surer Bond can be thought on, than an Oath; the Sacred, and Sovereign Instrument of all Justice and Obedience amongst Men? What farther Invention of State shall be able to stay the fearful Mischiefs, that hang over our heads from this Malicious and Murtherous Generation?

I Answer; None in the World, whilst they stay among us; not the most excellent, and Quintessential Policy of all the wisest States, that ly under the *Sun*, can afford help in this Case. Idolatry is ever attended with this inseperable Curse, that it will Plague that Kingdom, that Nourishes it; and pay it Home with a Witness, unless some Right Hand, and resolute Course be taken, for the more speedy rooting of it out. For indeed, the Depths of the *Mystery of Iniquity* are laid so infathomable, that they cannot be Sounded by Honest and Christian Policy: Nor are we ever likely to arrive at the Bottom of this Helliish Plot, without the Immediate Assistance of Allmighty God.

It's true, it were a very Just and Pious Act, to Administer to them the Oath, and bring them to the true Church. But their Violations of Oaths, Dispensations,
Abso-

Absolutions, and Pardons, &c. their Equivocations,
 Mental Reservations, Evasions, Corruptions of Consci-
 ence, and Execrable Violations of all Laws, both of
 God and Man, of Nations and Nature, are so Infinite,
 and Endless; and they so mingle their Conclusions of
 State, with the very Confusions of Hell, that in propor-
 tion, it is as easie to Chain up those Damned Spirits
 from Tempting men on Earth; as to Bridle these Blood-
 Thursty Monsters, from under-mining and over-turning
 those States, which profess the Truth of Christ, if po-
 wer and means were answerable to their Malice, and
 Revenge. Nor can we ever expect to be free from
 the implacable Malice of *Anti Christ* Abroad, unless we
 endeavour to suppress the rising Insolence of those her
 Followers at Home. Then, and not till then, the Royal
 Person of our most Gracious *King*, would be in safety;
 the Concurrent Fury of our greatest Enemies, durst not
 entertain a Thought of Invasion: This would cut the
 Throat of All Plots against the *King* and Government;
 and Crush the *Pope's* Heart, for ever harbouring any
 Probability of Exalting, or Re-establishing his Tyranny
 or Idolatry, in this happy *Island*.

And this wish for Condition, would be mightily far-
 thered by these 2 Means.

First, If Laws, worthily provided in such cases, might
 have their Course and Current, without Opposition,
 Diversion, Partiality, Diversion by false Friends, or a-
 ny Cunning Frauds and Delusions, of the Religious In-
 tentions thereof.

Secondly, If on our side, there were but half the care
 taken for the Maintainance of Christ's Truth, and Ex-
 tirpation of the Infectious Heresies of the *Man of Sin*,
 as there is Curiousness, and Cruelty in *Papish* Kingdoms,
 for the Continuance of *Anti Christianity*; and their Ba-
 nishing, and Barring out even of all possibility of *Re-forma-*

tion,

tion, Plantation of *Primitive Truth*, and Profession of Grace.

To Conclude; It is the General joynt Consent, and Current Conclusion, of all the *Christian Orthodox Reformed Churches*, upon the Face of *Europe*; and it is worthily and unanswerably demonstrated by King *James*, of happy Memory, That the *Pope* is *ANTI-CHRIST*; and *Rome*, the Mystical *Babylon*. Though I know, some few Authors, either Addicted to Partiality, or *Po-pery* have not assented hereunto; which is little a vailable, in a Truth so universally resolved on by *Divines* of best Learning and Judgement. So that, if we may take their words, before a few partial persons, that write against them, I would ask any man the meaning of these Scriptures — *Reward Her even as She hath rewarded you; And give Her double, according to Her Works*. And again, *In the Cup She hath Filled you, Fill Her the Double*. Rev. 18. 6. And in the 7. v. *In as much, as She Glorified Herself, and lived in Pleasure; so much give you to Her Torment and Sorrow*.

Sir; Delays are dangerous! and an Impunity to Idolatry, may shake the strongest Pillars in a well settled-State: And though I am far against Cruelty, yet I am mighty for Care; So that, if your Circumspection in that *Clas*s of a *Justice of the Peace*, where in his Majesty has bin pleas'd to Honor you, can any wise speedily promote the security of his Royal Person, the Extirpation of *Romish Recusants* out of the City, that the Citizens may sleep without Watch-lights at their Beds-heads, of fear of being rows'd by the dismal Outcry of *Fire! Fire!* In fine, If in your Station, you can Effect any thing, that may Conduce to the safety either of *King*, Country, or the *Protestant Religion*, There's no man of private Degree, shall Express himself more thankful,

*Than him whom you have honored with your
Friendship: and Subscribes.*

R. B.

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